

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

The written description portion of the specification, claims 1-4 and 7-9, and the abstract of the disclosure have been amended. Claims 5 and 6 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 10 and 11 have been added. Claims 1-4 and 7-11 are now pending in the application. Claims 1 and 10 are independent. The rejections are respectfully submitted to be obviated in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein. No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The specification has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.77(c), for consistency, and to correct any informalities. The abstract has been editorially amended for conformance with 37 CFR § 1.72(b). The claims have been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and in general to more fully comply with U.S. practice.

Claim 1 has been amended to define the locking ring as "being configured as a polygon that includes side parts and corner areas, the first partial areas including the corner areas and opposed free end areas that adjoin the locking ring opening, and the second partial areas including middle areas of the side parts of the polygon." Support for the instant recitation is found in original claim 5, at specification page 8, lines 5-8, and in drawing Figure 7.

New claims 10 and 11 have been added to further define the scope of protection sought for Applicant's invention.

Entry of each of the amendments is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102(b) - Sagady

Claims 1-5 and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,136,982 to Sagady.

The rejection under § 102(b) based on Sagady is respectfully deemed to be obviated. The disclosure of Sagady does not anticipate Applicant's presently claimed invention.

As indicated above in the introductory remarks, instant claim 1 defines a locking ring that is "configured as a polygon that includes side parts and corner areas, the first partial areas including the corner areas and opposed free end areas that adjoin the locking ring opening, and the second partial areas including middle areas of the side parts of the polygon." The first partial areas that engage in the inner groove of the ring part are formed by the corner areas between the side parts and the free end areas adjoining the opening of the locking ring. The second partial areas that project from the inner groove once the locking ring has been placed in the inner groove are formed by the middle areas of the side parts.

Sagady's "Centered Fastener Assembly" is structurally and functionally different from Applicant's presently claimed invention. Sagady does not disclose a polygonal locking ring, but rather a circular snap ring. Sagady's circular snap ring 20 is centered by a special metallic spring 22. There are neither side parts of a polygonal ring, the middle areas of which engage in the peripheral groove of the shaft part, nor corner areas engaging in the inner groove of the ring part. Therefore, the conventional snap ring, consisting of two different parts (snap ring and metallic spring), has no side parts, the middle areas of which project from the inner groove when the locking ring has been placed in this inner groove and which can be resiliently pushed outward on a section of the shaft part.

By virtue of the aforementioned features of the Applicant's invention, the opening and/or partition of the locking ring (free ends) is present at the largest diameter of the locking ring. As a result, it is certain that the free end areas of the locking ring are arranged in the inner groove of the ring part (i.e., after the insertion of the locking ring into the ring part and after the displacement of the peripheral groove of the shaft part to the inner groove of the ring part as well as after the extension of the locking ring in the inner groove of the ring part). With Applicant's claimed locking ring configuration, it is certain that the free end areas are not displaced axially, particularly when the shaft part is inserted into the ring part.

The advantages of Applicant's claimed invention as explained in the introductory part of the instant specification are simply not attainable with Sagady's snap ring.

Since Sagady does not meet each feature of the claimed invention, Sagady does not anticipate the invention defined by Applicant's instant claim 1. Pending claims 2-4 and 7-9 are allowable because they depend from claim 1, and for other reasons.

Since claim 6 has been canceled, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Sagady in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,605,939 to Spath is respectfully deemed to be obviated.

New claims 10 and 11 have been added to further define the scope of protection sought for Applicant's invention. New claims 10 and 11 are also allowable. Since independent claim 10 includes at least the features discussed above with respect to the rejection over Sagady, the reference neither anticipates nor would have rendered obvious the locking ring defined by either of claims 10 and 11.


In view of the foregoing, this application is now in condition for allowance. If the examiner believes that an

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interview might expedite prosecution, the examiner is invited to
contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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